

An Encouraging Word from Pastor Mike for March 12, 2022

Hello Everyone! – Time does fly when you're having fun. We are already at the point of turning our clock ahead one hour and losing an hours' worth of sleep. Isn't that exciting?! So we'll see how everyone does on Sunday – if you arrive an hour late for church we'll know what happened.

Just so that you can get it on your calendar, even though its four weeks away. **Here is The Schedule for Holy Week and Easter Services.**

Palm/Passion Sunday – April 10, 2022 – 9:30 a.m.

Holy Thursday (Maundy Thursday) – April 14, 2022 – Communion – 7:00 p.m.

Good Friday - April 15, 2022 – Worship Service – 7:00 p.m.

Easter Sunday – April 17, 2022 - Easter Sunrise Service 6:15 a.m.

8231 Bayside Drive, Pasadena

(Home of Dave Shelton's Sister, Joanne)

Easter Sunday – April 17, 2022 – Easter Celebration Service – 9:30 a.m.

Please share this information with friends and family. This information will also be posted on our Facebook Page. Please feel free to share on your page!! Thanks!

Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church is hosting a Covid-19 Vaccination Clinic

4760 Mountain Road, Pasadena 21122

Saturday, March 12, 2022 from 10am to 2pm

1st and 2nd doses available in addition to the booster

Appointments can be made at the link below BUT ARE NOT NECESSARY

<https://www.marylandvax.org/appointment/en/reg/1961660172>

We will be collecting money for UMCOR for the next 2 Sundays. We will be making sure that this collection goes directly to support the humanitarian response in Ukraine. Please make checks payable to Mt. Carmel UMC and indicate in the memo "for Ukrainian Relief". If you would like to donate cash, you may use the UMCOR Special Sunday envelopes to distinguish your donation.

Here's some repeated but important information.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to staff our nursery on Sunday mornings please let me know. We may not be able to staff every Sunday morning but we can let our young families know those Sundays when nursery will be available.

An important reminder to members and friends who enter the building – through either entrance – while the Child Development Center is open and operating: Please be sure you are masked – even if you are just going to the office or sanctuary. This is critically important for keeping our unvaccinated children safe and for setting a tone of caution for those using our facility.

If you have prayer requests, even if you plan to share them at Sunday worship, you may forward them ahead of time to Jen at the church office and she will compile a list to be used on Sunday morning.

Signing On For Zoom Worship Services. As most of you who Zoom our worship services know, I greet Zoom attendees as they sign on, take Zoom attendance, and assign names to phone numbers as phone callers sign on. I open the Zoom meeting at 9 a.m. in order to give people time to sign on. I encourage you to sign on early to avoid the crush of people signing on at the last minute. The earlier you sign on the easier it is for me to attend to the greeting responsibilities. It also gives us a chance to chat, and share prayer requests

The Announcements and Bulletin for Sunday's service are included as attachments to this encouraging word. Please feel free to print them out and either bring them with you to the service or to use them as your guide as you Zoom the service.

A Word About Giving. As we begin a new year, we face several challenges as a congregation. One of those challenges is financial. Your faithfulness and diligence in giving helped us weather many of those challenges and for that I and the leadership team thank you. However, last year we also had federal help, and assistance from our annual conference, which we will not receive this year. This presents yet another challenge – to meet the financial obligations of our congregation while supporting the mission and ministry needs of our community. Our greatest and perhaps only means of support in meeting this challenge in this coming year will be through your prayerful and faithful giving. You can help in several ways. First by prayerfully considering increasing your weekly or monthly offering. Secondly by enrolling in our E-giving program.

However you choose to support this ministry know that it is deeply appreciated and will enable our continued ministry presence in this community.

An Encouraging Word

“I am the Alpha and the Omega’, says the Lord God, who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” - Revelation 1:8

Something that I think others in my family find especially irritating is the habit I have of watching my favorite movies over and over again. The reason for this is that I know how these movies are going to end. So, you may ask, what’s the fun in watching a movie when I already know how it will end? I watch them again and again BECAUSE I know how they will end and that the ending will be a happy one. I call them my comfort movies. I have enough drama in my own life and am a witness to way too much drama in the world. I have enough uncertainty in my life. I don’t need uncertainty and drama in my entertainment. So it’s comforting for me to watch a movie that I know will end happily ever after.

The verse of scripture I sighted above, Revelation 1:8, concludes the salutation of John of Patmos’ letter to the seven churches in Asia Minor that we know as Revelation. That’s right, the “book” of Revelation is actually a letter. It was written to the seven churches as a kind of pep talk. It’s purpose was to encourage the seven congregations that were enduring a particularly nasty persecution under the Roman Emperor Domitian. Life for them was extremely difficult, uncertain, often violent, and certainly filled with drama. They needed to be assured, in spite of all evidence to the contrary, that God was in control and that God would overcome the terror they were experiencing. They needed to know that the drama they were living through would have a happy and victorious conclusion. John’s prophetic vision provides exactly that and affirms that God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things. It affirms that God will be victorious, that everything will be O.K.

Often we need to be reminded of the same thing. This is especially so now given what we are all dealing with in these troubled days. We hear reports of the violence, destruction, and senseless death taking place in Ukraine. We see video footage and photos that are truly distressing and disturbing. We worry about the war spreading and escalating. We grieve for the people involved. We’re concerned for the welfare of the countless refugees. We understand that what we are seeing is an attack on our own way of life and worry about the future of democratic states like ours. We want assurance that the drama now unfolding will end well, that everything will be alright.

Of course, all of our concerns are compounded by the Coronavirus which is still a threat, and an already stressed economy that has yet to recover. Then there are the dramas unfolding in our own lives to consider as well. We need assurance that everything will be alright. The people around us have the same need. We all need to be reminded of the same truths that John of Patmos was declaring to the seven churches of Asia Minor- that God is the beginning of all things and the end of all things, that God will be victorious, that everything will be O.K.

This is a critical and important message that we are entrusted with as Easter people who believe in the power of the resurrection and Christ's victory over sin and death. As Easter people we proclaim Christ's victory over death and all the things that destroy, terrorize, and enslave God's people. Obviously, as we look around us, we are reminded that God's Kingdom has not yet fully arrived. Modern life is filled with fear and uncertainty. In the midst of this there is a truth that we already know, to which we grasp, and which frees us from fear. We are assured that God is in control and that the end of the story will include a "happily ever after". As Easter people we need to embody the truth of Easter in a world of fear and uncertainty. We know how this movie is going to end. So, let's live our lives in the joy of that happy ending – the one which the empty tomb of Easter reminds us of – that death will not be victorious. As we watch things unfold, we can do so knowing it will work out in the end and – like John -we can transmit that confidence to everyone around us.

That's all for today. I'll see you on Sunday either on Zoom or at in-person worship. Until then be well, stay safe, make good decisions in this Coronavirus environment, and in please stay connected to each other and to God.

Blessings & Peace, Mike